

Matthew 10 | “Mission Preparations, Part 2”
Preached on September 3, 2023 by Pastor Matt Brown

You can turn in your Bibles to Matthew 10 verse 11 to start out, but we will be covering verse 11 all the way through the end of the chapter. *[pause]*

This is part 2 of a sermon that I’ve entitled, “Mission Preparations”. [pauseeee]

Matthew chapter 10 is all about Jesus calling and instructing His disciples to go out on mission for Him.

And what He does is He seeks to prepare them for what is to come, not just for this temporary mission, but also, for their future times of going on mission for Him. [pause]

So last week we saw how important it was to remember who called and sent us on mission in the world...

We minister for the Lord Jesus Christ.

There’s no one better to serve, and the mission we are involved in is eternally significant.
[pause]

And then we noticed how on this mission, we are to trust God to provide...

We can’t rely upon our own resources, but we must understand that God will take care of us as we minister for Him. *[pauseeee]*

Now for this Sunday, we will see the third thing that Jesus wants to impress upon us as we go on mission for Him.

And it has to do with telling us *what to expect*. *[pauseeee]*

Isn’t it a great comfort to know what to expect when you are going to face something new?
[pause]

Maybe for you it was a time when you had to go through surgery for the first time, and the doctor told you what to expect.

Knowing beforehand what to expect calmed your fears somewhat, as you could mentally prepare for the surgery. [pauseeee]

I remember before we had our first child, Kate and I took a childbirth class, which was extremely helpful. *[pause]*

We had never been through the whole childbirth process, so it was all daunting to us.

But what this class did for us was that it told us exactly what to expect. *[pause]*

What was helpful for me was learning what to expect during the whole labor process because it helped me to understand how close she was to giving birth and when to go to the hospital.

And the reason is because one of my fears was having to pull over on the side of the road and deliver the baby myself. *[pause]*

So by hearing about what to expect, it helped calm our fears and prepare us for what was to come.

And thankfully, we made it to the hospital in time for the birth of all four of our children, so I never had to deliver a baby myself. *[pauseeee]*

There's a certain comfort in knowing what to expect, and what Jesus does here is He tells us what to expect on mission for Him. *[pause]*

He wants us to be prepared and not caught off guard because as you think about what was just said, it all sounded so good, and so pleasant.

What could go wrong?

Serving Christ is just a breeze, right?

Actually, as Jesus talks in most of chapter 10, we are to...

I. Expect persecution, but don't fear. (11-42)

I will read, starting in verse 11, and I want you to notice this theme come out. *[READ]*

We, who are followers of Christ, sometimes have wrong expectations when we share the Gospel. *[pause]*

Occasionally, we will think, "The message of Christ is just so good, shouldn't everyone just respond well to it?"

Of course they *should*, but the truth is, they don't. *[pause]*

Or we think, "God is on my side, I'm serving Him, so shouldn't that mean that everyone will be supportive?" *[pauseeee]*

Now maybe you are sitting there thinking, "I've never thought that way."

Well let me ask you this, are you ever shocked that Christians are treated badly in our country?

Have you ever said, "The world is just getting worse and worse, I just can't believe they would do this."

If so, in some sense, you were expecting something different - expecting to be treated better. *[pause]*

You see, at some point, we all fall victim to this mentality of expecting things to be better than they are.

But Jesus repeatedly talked about how we should expect persecution. *[pauseeee]*

You see, as followers of Christ sent out into the world, we are being sent not to a utopian world, not even to a neutral world, but to a world in rebellion against God.

Like He says there in verse 16, “Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves.” *[pauseeee]*

Now it’s not all negative responses though, for Jesus makes it clear that there will be *mixed responses*. *[pause]*

In verses 11-15, we see that as the disciples go into the towns and villages, they were to seek out a receptive, welcoming house and stay there.

Yet Jesus also explains that there will be houses that will not receive them or listen to their words. *[pause]*

Also, if you go down all the way to verse 40, Jesus says, “Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me.” *[pause]*

So there will be receptive people, and the implication is that there will also be unreceptive people. *[pauseeeee]*

There will be mixed responses to us as we share Christ.

This shouldn’t catch us off guard.

This shouldn’t cause us to throw in the towel, but Jesus has warned us beforehand so that we can be prepared for it. *[pauseeeee]*

The disciples were not to let this mixed response cause them to give up the mission, but instead, Jesus tells them to “shake off the dust from [their] feet”.

The point is that they were to do their part of faithfully sharing the message, and then leave the town in God’s hands. *[pauseeee]*

This is a critical message that we need now.

We can’t allow the mixed responses of people to deter us from faithfully carrying out the mission of Christ. *[pause]*

It’s so easy to let the negative responses of people discourage us from continuing.

It’s easy to think, “Well look at how I was treated the last time I tried to speak about Christ, so why do it again?”

But when you are prepared, and know that there *will be* mixed responses, then you are mentally ready for the possibility of rejection. *[pauseeee]*

This is a critical message that we also need *for the days to come*.

As our culture increasingly becomes more anti-Christian, there will be a temptation to soften the message and shy away from what we are called to do and be.

So we can't go forward simply wishing for the better days gone by, but we must be ready and expect a mixture of responses. *[pauseeeee]*

Now this all sounds so bad, but there's good news within the truth that there will be mixed responses.

And the good news is that there will be some who *will* respond well to the message of Christ.

Christ is not done with the world, but He has more people in this city, in this county, and in this country.¹

They need to hear about Jesus Christ, and we are His messengers, sent out so that they may believe the good news of Christ. *[pauseeee]*

So there will be mixed responses to us as we share Christ, and there will be persecution for His name. *[pauseeeee]*

He states that His disciples will be delivered over to courts, flogged, and dragged before governors and kings. *[pause]*

Some of His disciples will be delivered over to death by family members, and we will be hated because we identify with Christ. *[pauseeeee]*

We so often take it personally when people persecute us for our faith, but really, they are doing so because they hate Christ.

Yet who else would you rather be associated with?!

Who else would you want to identify with and suffer for?!

He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who gave His life for you, and will someday come again in glory!

He is the Savior of the world, and the Great and Glorious One, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end!

What *an honor* to be associated with Him! *[pauseeee]*

¹ An allusion to Acts 18:10.

Do you think this way about enduring persecution for Christ?

Do you ever think, “Wow, I am suffering this because of Christ, and what an honor to be so associated and linked with the Savior!” *[pause]*

He’s worth it all!

And if you don’t think so, then your view of Jesus is infinitely too small. *[pauseeee]*

There will be difficulty being on mission for Christ, yet amidst that, there will be great opportunity for us. *[pause]*

Let’s say that someday it was illegal to be a Christian, and you were thrown in jail.

What would be your thoughts? *[pause]*

You might think, “Well it’s all over.”

But Jesus shows us that it’s not all over, for with great difficulty comes great opportunity. *[pauseeee]*

After saying that His disciples would be delivered over to courts, what does He say?

Look at verse 18, as He shows us that this will happen “[in order] to bear witness before them and the Gentiles.” *[pause]*

What an opportunity!

How often do you get to witness for Christ in front of a court, a governor, or a king?

Yet through their difficulty, they would have a great opportunity to speak of Christ. *[pauseeee]*

When *you* face difficulty and persecution for following Jesus, do not think that all is lost.

No, think about the new opportunities that that brings for further witness for Christ.

The gospel can go forth in areas that we never thought were possible before because we will be placed in new situations. *[pause]*

And as we face these new situations, we don’t have to fear not knowing what to say, but Christ promises that the Spirit will give us the words to speak. *[pauseeee]*

For us, this doesn’t mean that we will speak new revelation, but that the Spirit will call to mind the Word of God, so that we can speak up for Christ. *[pause]*

Basically, we can rest assured that God will be with us, help us, and aid us in faithfully sharing Jesus. *[pauseeeee]*

It won't be easy to follow Christ faithfully in this world, but just think about how much Christ cares for you.

For we see in this chapter that people are held accountable for how they respond to us when we share the message of Jesus. *[pauseeee]*

In verses 14-15, Jesus is talking about towns that do not receive or listen to the disciples, and he says...

“Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town.” *[pause]*

And then if you move down to verses 40-42, you see that those who receive us, receive Christ.

And even if someone gives a cup of cold water to us because we are Christ's disciple, they will receive reward. *[pause]*

Just think about that!

Christ cares about us so much and is linked with us so closely that he will reward people who give us even a cup of cold water because we are one of His disciples! *[pause]*

He doesn't disregard us and think, “Eh, I don't care if they suffer for me. They're expendable.”

Rather, He takes it personally how people treat us, as if they were doing it to Him! *[pause]*

What love of Christ!

He truly cares for you!

You aren't just a number to Him, or a little minion, who He couldn't care less about.

You are precious to Him, and you are His, if you are truly one of His disciples. *[pauseeee]*

If someone treats you well because of Him, His heart beats with joy that His disciple was treated well.

And if someone rejects you and persecutes you, rejecting the Gospel - they are rejecting Christ, and oh how terrible the judgment will be for one who was given such an opportunity, but rejected it! *[pauseeee]*

Do you expect mixed responses and persecution when you stand up for Jesus, or are you caught off guard?

Are you shocked by the way our country treats Christians? *[pause]*

Expect persecution, for Christ made it clear that we would face it for His sake. *[pauseeeee]*

If Christ just left it there, we could be overtaken with fear, but Christ never wants us to be fearful people.

Instead, He continually gives us reasons *not* to fear, and this chapter is beaming with comfort. [pauseeee]

As I was looking at verses 26-33, I saw a theme pop out, and that theme is the comfort of God's character. [pause]

Jesus shows us that everything we go through should be seen in light of who God is. [pauseeee]

First, we don't have to fear when we remember *His all-knowing justice*.

Verse 26 says, "So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known." [pauseeee]

There is nothing truly 'secret' in this world, for all things will be revealed and made known.

So the evil works of those who persecute you will not remain hidden forever, but God knows, and He will bring justice. [pause]

What a comfort!

Though someone may treat you horribly behind the scenes because you are a Christian, it's not truly hidden to the Lord.

Though no one else knows, He knows.

So why fear when you know that God is a God of all-knowing, perfect justice? [pauseeee]

That's not all though, for we also don't have to fear when we remember *God's power*. [pause]

Jesus says in verse 28, "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell." [pause]

When we compare people's power to God's power, it just doesn't compare.

Other people's power is limited, for they can only deal with our physical bodies, but God has the power over our physical bodies and our souls.

So why would we fear them over God?

How could we be unfaithful to all-powerful God in order to avoid their small, limited power?

Do we forget who God is and the power He has? [pauseeee]

Now if we only thought about God's justice and power, we would end up merely shaking in our boots before Him.

But we are also to remember *His all-knowing care* for us. *[pause]*

Jesus states that sparrows are worth such little price, yet “not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.”

And He says that, “even the hairs of [our heads] are all numbered.”

So we shouldn’t fear, for we are “of more value than many sparrows.” *[pause]*

Just think about that!

Jesus is telling us that God knows about and cares about sparrows, and He even knows how many hairs you have!

So if He knows about and cares about such small things that we often overlook, then just consider the depth of His knowledge, care, and love for you! *[pause]*

He doesn’t overlook you.

He isn’t unconcerned and uncaring about what you go through as you serve Christ, for He truly knows, cares, and is in control. *[pauseeee]*

Truly, fear is dispelled when you believe in who God is, so look at the situations of your life through the lens of the character of God. *[pauseeee]*

Is my situation hidden? How can it be hidden when God is all-knowing?

Is this person powerful? They don’t look so powerful when you consider God’s power.

Does the Lord care? He cares about sparrows and knows your hair count, so He cares about you. *[pauseeeee]*

So yes, expect persecution in this world, but do not fear, for you have an amazing Heavenly Father.

But what will be the deciding factor of whether we endure or not? *[pause]*

It’s great that we don’t fear persecution while we are in it, but what causes us to even go through persecution to start out?

Because someone could avoid persecution, if they really wanted to.

The answer --- loyalty to Christ is needed to go through and endure persecution for His name. *[pauseeee]*

Look there at verse 34, for Jesus says something shocking, when He says, “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.” *[pause]*

Wait a second, I thought that Jesus brings peace to earth? *[pause]*

He brings peace between us and God, certainly, and gives us peace, for sure.

But Jesus is talking here about how people divide over Him. *[pause]*

He's not someone that all people just love, but rather, there are those that love Him and those that hate Him.

And as a consequence, family members end up enemies with each other, due to their disagreement over Christ. *[pause]*

Some of us haven't experienced this because many in our family are Christians, but there are some who do have to experience this.

They are Christians, but the rest of their family is not, so there's this constant tension and animosity among them.

This is most clearly seen in Muslim families where one person becomes a Christian, and they are ostracized in the family. *[pause]*

You see, being loyal to Jesus is divisive, as some people will be angry that you are a Christian.

So because of this, your loyalty to Jesus will be tested. *[pause]*

Maybe for you, it's not your family members, but your co-workers or friends. *[pause]*

They make fun of you for following Jesus, or they even show hostility towards you in some way.

Maybe they mock you, or do some things to get at you, and make you look bad in front of others. *[pause]*

Whatever it may be: it's because you are loyal to Jesus that you experience this opposition.

Well let me tell you, this conflict is going to test your loyalty to Jesus.

Will you remain faithfully loyal to Christ or not?

Will you give in to their antagonism and shy away from proudly being a Christ follower?

Or will you boldly stand up for Christ? *[pause]*

Look down at verse 36, and notice how right after Jesus says "a person's enemies will be those of his own household"...

...He goes on to say, "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." *[pauseeee]*

You see, you can't love family more than Jesus because what happens if they are against you following Christ? *[pauseeee]*

Christ is truly more important than family, do you truly believe that?

Some of you may not realize that your family can become an idol in your life, but Jesus makes it clear that *He* must be loved most in your life, or you are not fit to be His disciple. *[pause]*

Really think about that, for it's convicting.

If you love your family more than Christ, you are not worthy of Him.

You are not deserving or suitable. *[pauseeee]*

So let me ask you: do you love Christ more than your family? *[pause]*

What happens if they become angry that you follow Him? Will you desert Him?

What happens if your child says, "I'm going to walk away from you forever if you don't just affirm my lifestyle?" *[pause]*

Family loyalty and love must never overtake your loyalty and love to Christ. *[pause]*

This is shocking to many because they have a low view of Christ, to be honest.

They grew up only seeing Jesus as someone necessary so that they can receive their ticket to Heaven, but they don't consider Him their Lord and Master.

They don't think of Him as the One who is to have supreme allegiance in their life.

But that's who He is -- He is to be higher than your family. *[pause]*

And if you balk at that, you are only proving that family is above Him in your heart, and you are not fit to be a disciple. *[pause]*

You see, Jesus is to be supreme in our hearts and minds.

So supreme, that we are willing to take up our cross and follow Him.

So supreme, that we are willing to lose our lives for His sake. *[pause]*

And in order to do those things, then Christ has to be all to you.

He has to be more important than your comforts, more important than the approval of your co-workers and friends, and more important than your physical life itself. *[pause]*

Could you say that?

Could you say as that one song says, “You may have all this world, but give me Jesus.”?
[pauseeee]

Is Jesus truly your life, or is He just an add-on to it?

Is He truly your life, or is He a dispensable part of your life? [pause]

Like how could we not love Him above all when He loved us so much that He was slaughtered so that we could be set free?

How could we not take up our cross and follow Him when He took up His Cross, bore the wrath of sin that we deserved, and gave up His life in our place?

How could we not lose our lives for His sake, when He gave up His life for ours? [pauseeeee]

How could we put anything above the King and Lord of all, who rose from the grave and ascended to the right hand of the Father?

Who is more deserving and worthy?

Who is more powerful and gracious? [pause]

May God snap us out of our low view of Jesus, and wake us up to the glories of Christ!

May our love for Him grow in leaps and bounds!

May our commitment to Him strengthen so much so that the force of a cross and the weighty prospect of giving up our life won’t break it...

...Because we know that in Him is life, and joy, and peace. [pause]

He is our only hope in life and death,² and so may our hearts confidently say, “You are worth it, Lord!” [pauseeee]

You see, the great and glorious Lord Jesus Christ has called us and has sent us on an amazing mission for Him.

He has assured us that we can trust God to provide, and that there will be difficulty ahead, but we don’t have to fear.

So that means that we can remind ourselves that...

We are sent on mission by Christ, so let’s serve wholeheartedly!

What a Savior, who we serve!

² I’m referring to the line from the song, “Christ Our Hope in Life and Death,” by Keith Getty, Matt Boswell, Jordan Kauflin, Matt Merker, & Matt Papa.

What a mission that we are called to participate in: making disciples.

So let's serve our Lord on this mission wholeheartedly! *[pauseee]*

They say that nowadays as Americans we are very unwilling to commit to things.

May that never be said of us when it comes to Christ, and what He has called us to.

May we follow Him with our lives, serving Him and doing what He has called us to do. *[pause]*

So will you shine as a light as you go through your week?³

Will you share Christ with someone this week? *[pause]*

Remember that you can endure whatever comes, knowing that you do not have to fear, and Christ is worth it all.

³ A reference to Matthew 5:14-16.